

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: Thomas D. Taggart

Examiner: Soubra, I.

16/E

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For: **APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR PROVIDING STERILIZATION ZONES IN
AN ASEPTIC PACKAGING STERILIZATION TUNNEL**

Commissioner for Patents
Washington D.C. 20231

Sir:

This paper is being filed in response to the Final Office Action mailed May 22, 2002.

Applicant respectfully requests that the above-identified application be reconsidered in view of the Amendments and Remarks that follow, that each of the presently pending claims be allowed, and that the application be passed to issue.

Amendment

Please amend the above-referenced patent application as follows:

In The Claims

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Thrice Amended) Apparatus comprising:

a sterilization tunnel for surrounding a plurality of containers with pressurized gas; and

a plurality of zones within the sterilization tunnel having different sterilant concentration

levels therein wherein the sterilant concentration levels in the plurality of zones are maintained at